



Building bridges with Rwanda

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Keywords: Rwanda, case study, asset-mapping, critical reflection, global service learning

Conference track: Global community engagement and comparative studies

Format: Team inquiry presentation

Summary

This session will offer a lively discussion based on a first year case study of a program between a Rwanda NGO and a U.S. university. Western Washington University (WWU) students will learn and serve for five weeks in the community of Gashora (pop 2,000), a village located in an Eastern Province of Rwanda, under the supervision of their faculty and community development planner who returned to his native land after three decades living in Canada. The goal of this global service learning program is to foster shared learning through community engagement. University students will be exposed to practical problems that face a post conflict society and will be supported in gaining a deeper understanding of socioeconomic realities that challenge post genocide Rwanda.

In the first year of this program, students and community members will use an asset-mapping model to initiate relationships and as a tool for building trust. In addition, and intrinsic to our program model, we will utilize an ongoing feedback system of critical reflection between community and university members at all stages of the experience, in part to generate data for future partnership and program development. The WWU team will explore strategies to develop collaborative and sustainable relationships with community partners as co-educators and will involve knowledgeable community

experiences take place. We will also explore the meaning of service in Rwandan and North American cultures, its elements of altruism and egoism, and its relationship to the implications of service in other cultures. This course will include curriculum that explores important issues relating to culture, economics, social justice, and gender roles when traveling.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.